

WATER QUALITY PROGRAMS

Arizona Department of Environmental Quality's (ADEQ) Water Quality Division (WQD) supports the overall agency mission of protecting and enhancing public health and the environment of Arizona.

Clean water means healthy people, a healthy environment and a competitive economy.

The Water Quality Division (WQD) protects and enhances public health and the environment by ensuring healthy drinking water is provided by public water systems and by controlling current and future sources of surface and ground water pollution. Our core responsibilities include:

- Regulating the treatment and discharge of wastewater.
- Monitoring and assessing the quality of surface and groundwater throughout the state.
- Identifying water pollution problems and developing on-the-ground solutions and facilitating their implementation.
- Issuing permits to protect Arizona waters from point sources of pollution.
- Investigating complaints and violations of Arizona's water quality laws.

Safe Drinking Water Act

Under the Safe Drinking Water Act, protection of drinking water quality starts with an assessment of the quality of all public water sources and continues through regulations that govern water system design and construction. Drinking water quality is further assured through scheduled tests for a wide variety of potential contaminants. The results of these tests are reported to the WQD and a summary is delivered to customers once a year. As a result of these regulations and continued testing, drinking water supplies in the United States are among the cleanest and safest in the world. Arizona is no exception.

Groundwater Protection

ADEQ issues Aquifer Protection Permits (APP) to safeguard Arizona's groundwater. This program controls the discharge of pollutants from sewage treatment facilities, septic tanks, mining operations and other industrial facilities. They may also require facilities to undertake special measures to protect human health and the environment from harmful pollutants.

Pesticide Contamination Prevention Program

This program prevents groundwater contamination from routine agricultural pesticide use. The program regulates agricultural use of pesticides and includes the creation of the Groundwater Protection List, publishing an annual report of the use of pesticides with the potential to reach and impact groundwater.

Surface Water

The WQD implements a number of Clean Water Act (CWA) programs including:

- Developing surface water quality standards to protect human health and the environment.
- Monitoring the water quality of streams and lakes throughout the state.
- Assessing whether surface waters are meeting water quality standards.
- Developing a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) plan with a goal to reduce pollutants and restore water quality, if standards are not being met.

Once a TMDL is adopted, ADEQ works closely with the public and private interests in the watershed. To improve water quality, the WQD implements the Arizona Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (AZPDES) program. This program requires all facilities that discharge pollutants into streams and lakes to obtain a permit.

Regulated discharges include sewage treatment facilities, construction sites larger than one acre, municipal storm water systems and a variety of industrial facilities.

Water Quality Improvement Grants

The WQD's Water Quality Improvement Grant (WQIG) program works with local government, citizens and industry to develop and fund restoration projects and educational opportunities to protect and restore water quality that is threatened by nonpoint pollution sources, such as channelization, some agricultural practices and septic systems.

Arizona Water Watch

To better protect and enhance Arizona's water quality, ADEQ established Arizona Water Watch, offering Arizonans ages 10 through retirement the opportunity to volunteer in the Citizen Science Water Monitoring Program, helping ADEQ monitor the health of our waters and inform measures to protect it for future generations.